United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ General Assembly calls on United Nations and League of Arab States to intensify cooperation to strengthen international peace and security, development and self-determination; urges ECLAC and UNDP to expand coordination with Latin American Economic System.

+ Special Commission team concludes on-site investigation into alleged use of chemical weapons in Iraqi marshlands; no immediate evidence found, but definitive finding subject to lengthy laboratory analysis.

+ Somalis select regional delegates to attend Fourth Coordination Meeting on Humanitarian Assistance to Somalia, beginning in Addis Ababa next Monday.

+ Deputy-Prime Minister of Iraq, meeting with Secretary-General at Headquarters, says his country seeks to build confidence with United Nations.

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The General Assembly today called on the United Nations and the League of Arab States to intensify cooperation on strengthening international peace and security, development, disarmament, decolonization, self-determination and the eradication of racism and racial discrimination. Acting without a vote, the Assembly also urged the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other agencies to expand coordination with the Latin American Economic System (SELA).

The Assembly also considered the question of cooperation with the Organization of the Islamic Conference and with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), but postponed action on related draft resolutions to a later date. The representative of Israel called on the Arab League to end its boycott against his country, citing the enormous advantages of regional economic cooperation. "Peace and economic cooperation go hand-in-hand", he said. "Economic boycott runs counter to the principles of the peace process and delays reconciliation between the countries of the region." The observer for the Arab League said it sought the consolidation of peace in the region,

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and supported the call for the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied territories. In order to achieve the objective of land for peace, steps should be taken to ensure the right of return of the Palestinian people.

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A team sent by the Special Commission on the disarmament of Iraq to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons in marshlands north-west of Basrah yesterday concluded its on-site work, according to the Commission. No immediate evidence of the use of chemical weapons was found, but a definitive finding will not be reached until samples taken at the site have been analysed. That process could take some months.

The team conducted a thorough inspection of the site and took a large number of soil, water, flora and fauna samples which will be analysed in various laboratories. The Commission also obtained certain documents the authenticity and relevance of which is subject to investigation.

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Somali civilian leaders are in the process of selecting regional delegates to attend the Fourth Coordination Meeting on Humanitarian Assistance to Somalia which begins in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 29 November, according to the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II). So far, delegates from eight regions have been selected. Some 90 delegates from the country's 18 regions are expected to participate in the three-day Conference.

Meanwhile, a UNOSOM II team has been travelling through the country discussing arrangements for the Conference with Somalis from all walks of life. In addition to discussing Conference arrangements, the team has been reviewing such issues as the need for Somalia's ultimate recovery to be firmly based on the efforts and contributions of the Somali people.

The Conference, which will be chaired by Jan Eliasson, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, will be attended by representatives of donor Governments, regional organizations, United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations. The major objectives will be: to agree on how to address immediate relief and rehabilitation needs; to agree on strategies to be followed and rehabilitation activities to be undertaken; to agree on what Somali and international institutions will be needed to manage the reconstruction process pending a functioning national administration; and to familiarize participants with the implications of Somali ownership of the recovery and development process. In particular, discussions are expected to focus on the responsibilities of Somalis for the creation and maintenance of a secure and safe environment, as well as the consequences of continuing insecurity and instability.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met today at Headquarters with the Deputy-Prime Minister of Iraq, Tariq Aziz, and exchanged views on all

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outstanding issues concerning that country's compliance with United Nations resolutions, according to a spokesman for the Organization. Mr. Aziz expressed his Government's willingness and desire to build confidence between the United Nations and Iraq.

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